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BECKONINGS
FROM
LITTLE HANDS



KD9377

BECKONINGS FROM LITTLE HANDS

PRIVATELY PRINTED, 1893

REVISED FOR PUBLICATION

BECKONINGS FROM LITTLE HANDS

EIGHT STUDIES IN CHILD-
LIFE. WITH DESIGNS AND
DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR
AND WITH PROCESS - WORK
COPIES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

Patterson Du Bois
=

"A little child shall lead them."

PHILADELPHIA
JOHN D. WATTLES & CO.
1895

KD 9377



James A. Miller, Secretary

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BY

PATTERSON DU BOIS

TO
THE MOTHER-HEARTED
Mother
OF OUR
FOUR LITTLE LEADERS

*Alas for the teacher who does not learn more from his
children than he can ever hope to teach them !*

G. STANLEY HALL.

APOLOGY.

These beckonings are real beckonings. They were discerned not in dreams, nor in books, but through the golden atmosphere of family life, in the sweet seclusion of the home.

But "none of us liveth to himself." We are all children of one Father. If the messages that have come to us have helped us, we must pass them on. Some things are too sacred to be kept forever secret. Every high and holy experience is a trust, sacred to the high and holy need of those to whom we are sent to minister.

There is a world of childhood, underrated, misunderstood, slighted, snubbed, thwarted, oppressed. Yet while the children—whom our Lord thought worthy of exalting as our model—are held in the

meanest kind of subjection by those who love them, they remain bravely patient and loyal.

With four little ones pointing to this truth, the question brought squarely before me was, not whether I had a right to speak their message, but whether I had a right to withhold it.

The result was the first edition of these studies. It was printed privately, and its circulation restricted to such as presumably would sympathize with its spirit, and appreciate what the execution of such a trust from my little benefactors meant.

At once, appeals for an unrestricted issue were pressed from near and far, from stranger and from friend; from parents conscious alike of their ignorance and their responsibility; from the clergy, from kindergartners, primary teachers, and persons eminent in educational, literary, and other walks where the child is studied from either the scientific or the humanitarian point of view. For nearly two years the author was thus advised of

his moral obligation to make accessible to the public that which it could not ask as a gift, but which it had so eagerly sought—for childhood's sake.

The present edition is therefore a long-considered response to the importunate pleas of the child-lover, and a renewed plea to the people in behalf of the children.

The chapters may be regarded progressively as affording perspective views of truths revealed in child-development. While in this sense they are closely related one to another, yet each chapter has its individual completeness. If this may appear to involve occasional repetition, it emphasizes the fact that the book is not a memoir, but a book of principles. It is only because those who taught me those principles happen to be my children, that I cite my children to illustrate those principles. If the work memorializes, it does so incidentally, not of direct intention. Its purpose is both to awaken sympathy and to inform. It pleads for justice to children by exhibiting some phases

of the strength and the weakness of child-nature.

Just a word to those who are neither parents nor teachers. One who has no children under his direct care is likely to think that there is nothing in such a subject for him. But no one can lovingly study children or enter into child-life without finding such study result in the quickening of his powers of observation and discernment, and the enlargement of his sympathies. No one, indeed, can afford to ignore that which is calculated to elevate and develop any class. Though one be not formally in the business of aiding children or men, his own business cannot suffer by his being made keener minded and kinder hearted.

It is proper to add that the records, of which these narrations are but a minor part, cover a period of over sixteen years. They purport, as far as they go, to be scientifically exact. They are made with the full consciousness of the dangers of error through parental bias, but with the convic-

tion that they are photographically true. Nor is it forgotten that there is a necessity of distinguishing that which is special to the individual child from that which is common to children, or characteristic of childhood. And yet "she is only half a mother who does not see her own child in every child—her own child's grief in every pain which makes another child weep."

Every child is, in some way, if not in the same way as mine, "a young eagle that soars one moment up to the sky, and drops immediately after into his nest." Looking up to the sky, let us respect and reverence the child ; looking down to the home nest, let us nurture and protect him.

PATTERSON DU BOIS.

October 28, 1894.

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FATHERHOOD.

My baby boy, I sing of thee
Because thou art like song to me.
Thy joys and fears, thy smiles and tears,
Are rhythmic in their rising ;
Thy pantomimes, like tropes and rhymes,
Are full of sweet surprising.
A little lyric bit thou art ;
A drama quickens in thy heart,
Concealed forsooth ;
But through thy deep soul-magic
I see the truth,—
Thy comedies are tragic.

Thou atom of the ages,
Thou force among the forces
Out from the Source of sources,
Thou puzzler of the sages,
Back comes to me thy mimicry ;
This heart of mine beats on in thine,
One life Divine—
Thy destiny
In me.

I.

Be cautious, be careful and thoughtful at this point, O parents! You can here at one blow destroy, at least for a long time, the instinct of formative activity in your children, if you repel their help as childish, useless, of little avail, or even as a hindrance.

What we no longer possess—the all-quicken-
ing, creative power of child-life—let it again be
translated from their life into ours. . . . Let us
live for our children: then will the life of our
children bring us peace and joy, then shall we
begin to grow wise, to be wise.

FROEBEL.



The
**FIRE
BUILDERS**

UT of the darkness,
light; out of the
chill and dreary
atmosphere of fail-
ure and regret,
a clearer sight, a
warmer heart, a

better life. Our efforts

may seem to be in vain when they result
in failure, but the failure itself need not be
in vain. The responsibility is upon us of
making our failures serve a good purpose
in showing where we have been inexperience-
d, thoughtless, weak, unjust. Then,

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out of the darkness and cold shall flame
forth light and warmth ; out of the wrong
shall come the right ; out of the tears of
a child, the smiles of childhood.

The warm days had lingered on until at
last the keen edge of an autumn wind, sever-
ing the seasons, turned the summer adrift to
the mists of the silent
sea.



Standing in the dim
light and chilly atmos-
phere of my cellar, I
had touched the match
to the paper and bits of
wood in the furnace. My little boy of four
and a half years—superbly built, noble fel-
low that he was!—stood by, with his two
chubby hands filled with sticks of kin-

dling, ready to throw them into the fire when I should open the door and give the order. The arrangement had been that he might come down and "help me" build a fire, with the understanding that he must be careful not to soil his dress with the wood,—he should hold it out, and not hug it in his arms; neither must he get against the sooty furnace. He was naturally methodical and neat, so that there seemed to be nothing exacting in the conditions upon which we started down for a bit of grand good fun.

The flames were roaring up the chimney. "Now," I said, "when I open the door, you shall see the fire, and you must throw in the sticks quickly, or the smoke will pour out into the cellar." It was an exciting experience,—the first time my boy had had a hand in fire-building, the

very thing that he was always warned to keep aloof from. The roar of the draught, the fierce fury of the flame, the lurid light in the cellar dusk,—he almost forgot to throw in the wood. “Quick!” I said,—“quick, while the door is open!” One stick went in; the second struck the plate inside, and I pushed it in. “Hurry!” I said again; and the third struck the side of the door-frame, and fell to the floor.

Of course, the little fellow was dazed for the moment. He was expected to make haste in a work that was wholly novel, as well as exciting, to him. Should he stop to pick up that stick, or throw in the two that he still held? One stick on the floor, the roaring fire, the outpouring smoke, too many orders from me, the work of it, the play of it, the novelty of it, the bewildering haste of it all,—he stooped hesitatingly for

the fallen stick, and instinctively tightened his grasp on the others by folding them into his arms against his immaculate frock! I shut the door in haste, and, seeing his attitude, broke out with: "Now look at that dirty wood against your clean dress! I told you that you should not come down here if you did that!"

He looked confused a moment, then dropped the wood, turned round and ran toward the stairs, ascended and disappeared. In that crucial moment, what silent criticism must the keen logical sense, the half-godlike instinct of childhood, have passed on me! Relatively, I had expected more of him than I should expect of myself or of any grown man. I heard the quickening feet of my little helper on the floor overhead, heard him climb the stairway to the second story;

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and while I stood mutely wondering at the suddenness of his departure, I heard him burst into a loud and piteous cry. He had not fallen,—no; he had not hurt himself; it was I that had fallen, I that had hurt him. But he was in his mother's arms; his head was on his mother's shoulder.

I loved that boy. I loved to teach him; but I ought to have sat at childhood's feet to learn, before I expected him to sit profitably at mine. I would not have hurt him for the world; but I did not know what a child was, and consequently could not shield him from myself. I should have known myself and human nature better, had I known him better. "The child is father of the man."

When the next autumn came, what would I not have given to see again that

childish expectancy, those little hands filled with wood, that noble head and regal form lit up with the weird glow from the furnace flames! I longed in my heart to sit at his feet as my teacher; to help him by showing him how best to help me, to please him by showing him that he pleased me.

He was logical, I was illogical; he was true, I was false; he was doing his best, I was doing my worst. I had imposed conditions which could not be complied with. I had exacted a promise which he was too innocent, too inexperienced, to know that he could not keep. I reflected upon him as morally disobedient, when he was only physically fallible; as obstinate, when he was only confused and embarrassed; careless, when he was only bewildered; heedless, when he was only

hurried; false, when he was truest to himself and to me; wrong, when his best wish and motive was to be right.

Yes! I would have given my life to tell him how I had wronged him; but he was now where he needed no further instruction from me, where he was no longer in danger of being ignorantly blamed and unjustly reprimanded. Those little feet were farther above me than the floor just overhead, and the voice of the pained and injured spirit had gone to join the voices of the thousands of thousands around the great white throne.

One, two, three, four years passed. But I was more than four years older. I had lived a whole new life, for I had had time to sit down and think. In the silence of my sorrow, I could turn over the pages of the past. A life that was gone came

before me as a new life that is. He was my helper, my educator, now, if not then. He had passed beyond my teaching, that I might pass forevermore into his.

Five years went by. The keen autumnal wind came again.

“Would you like to go down in the cellar and help papa make a fire?”

I asked. My spirited boy jumped from his chair, his long golden curls dancing upon his shoulders, as he hailed

with delight the promise of so rich and novel an experience. I exacted no promise from him which common sense—to say nothing of experience—taught me he might not be able to keep, though I



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was cautious to impress him with the necessity of being careful. I would try to show him how to keep the wood from soiling his dress. He was nearly four years old ; almost the same age as his brother—whom he never saw—had been at the time of the incident just recorded.

A shuddering awe crept over me for the moment. Was I competent to undertake with my second boy that which I had so signally failed in with my first? Was I to be trusted with that tenderest, truest, most God-like of all earthly things,—the heart of a confiding child? Could it be that God was willing to try me again? Could I make reparation to my lost one by doing for his little brother that which I ought first to have done for him? All those five years I had longed to recall that one day in my life, to be just where

I had been unjust, and to heal where I had wounded. Was it possible that now an opportunity had come?

The flames were roaring up the pipe again, and my little man was standing, as did his brother, years before, with his hands loaded with wood. I almost trembled as the past came before me and so overlaid the present that each seemed to lose its own identity. I seemed to see one picture through the other, so that the two weirdly mingled their outlines and colors. Was I dreaming? No! it was a heart-searching reality. In an instant the sting of the old regret pierced me and inspired me to feel that success might be learned from failure, that past pain might bring present joy, and joy forever.

"Quick!" I ejaculated, "while the door is open. Throw in the wood, quick!"

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One stick after another flew into the flames; then one struck the door-frame, and fell to the floor. History was repeating itself with painful accuracy of detail. Should he let that go, or throw in others? Volumes of smoke poured out, and I hurried him again. He was confused, and I knew it. As his brother's pupil, I had learned to recognize that and to respect it. I saw him clasp the wood to his breast as he stooped. He soiled his dress, but he was not disobedient; he was doing his best. He believed that he was my helper, and so he was, even in a better way than he knew. He picked up the stick, threw it, and it fell again. "Never mind," I said; "don't hurry too much. I will hold the door until you are quite ready." (Oh that I had said that five years ago!) The next time he tried, he suc-

ceeded. Yes; he succeeded, but not half so much as I did. I helped him in his bit of fun, but not half so much as he helped me in my bit of life-learning.

We started upstairs together. No hurt spirit fled before me in quest of solace. His trusting little hand was laid in mine. It took both those hands to build that fire. A serene little face looked smilingly up to me. It was not a piteous cry of a wounded heart that I heard, but the sweet music of a joyous voice, saying eagerly, "Did I help you, papa?" Only God knew why I put such an emphasis on the answer, "Yes, my dear little boy, you *did* help me." Then, breaking loose from my grasp, I heard his little feet outrun me, not to his mother for refuge from trouble, but for very joy to tell her that he had been my helper.

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And somehow I think that the angels knew that I held two little hands, and saw two little faces, and answered two little voices, and sought to lighten two little hearts, when I said "You helped me." Perhaps I helped them to build a fire; perhaps they helped me to build a character; and perhaps, too, they "builded better than they knew." But God knows.



II.

Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
The thought, the image, and the silent joy ;
Words are but underagents in their souls ;
When they are grasping with their greatest
 strength
They do not breathe among them.

WORDSWORTH.

THE VICTORY OF STRUGGLE.



HERE is such a thing as a victory of struggle as well as a struggle for victory. There is a struggle that, failing of achievement, is in itself a most high and noble form of achievement. He who accomplishes his purpose with ease may have accomplished less than he who has struggled for that accomplishment and failed.

Of these inward struggles of the spirit the world knows little. And one reason why the world knows so little of them is because it is the little people—the chil-

dren—who furnish the greater part of the heroes of those hidden wrestlings of the soul. The world does, once in a while, recognize the hero in a child who rescues a comrade from some bodily peril. But of the struggles within, the fierce spiritual combats for the mastery of right over wrong, for the overcoming of difficulties of temperament, difficulties in the constitution of mind and of body, difficulties of environment,—of these the world keeps itself ignorant, and the child knows it and feels it. Yet all the nobler is its heroism for this isolation, this painful loneliness, this cruel exile of soul.

I once caught a glimpse of a bit of this occult heroism. It was in the lamp-light. A little white-robed figure darted through the library portiere, and after a hug around my neck, and a rain of kisses as well, my

affectionate boy was ready to kneel at my lap for his bedtime prayer.

Mild, tractable, obedient, yet full of life, spirits, and zeal, he was the very incarnation of an unselfish, outgoing affection, my ideal lover, with whom to love was to live, to live was to love. He was at once bold and timid, shy and familiar, of fine sensibilities, open, talkative, yet reticent in all that to his realest self was sacred and divine. With all his joviality, his bodily activity, his demonstrativeness, he was painfully reserved—a veritable prophet of silence. Never until now, when he was fast approaching five years of age, had he added an original petition to his prayers, or been able, except in prayer, to so much as mention the name of the Deity.

It had been one of those days when in child life, as in adult life, everything seems

to go wrong and to be at cross purposes, —rather let us say, with grown persons it is claimed that “things go wrong,” while in the case of children it is the children themselves who are charged with going wrong. Before my lover knelt in prayer, I talked to him, and asked him whether he wanted to do right, even though he sometimes found it hard. He convinced me that he did, and I told him, for his encouragement, that it was so with me oftentimes, and that we had only to ask God to help us if we would make the effort.

Having repeated his “Now I lay me,” my boy was about to rise, when I told him again, in a low voice, that God would help him as he would help us all,—for I was particular to impress upon him that, being as human and helpless as he, I spoke from practical experience. “Suppose you

say, 'Help me to do right,'" I said. He was silent. I waited a few moments, and still there was no response.

"Can't you just say, 'Help me to do right'?" I asked in as sympathetic a tone as I could command. Another pause, and still no response. I put my hand on his head, toyed with his hair, spoke his name familiarly, and—still he was silent. I bent over, bringing my face nearer to his, and said in a lower tone: "Can't you say it?"

"No," he answered in a stifled voice.

"Very well," I continued, "if you *can't*, you had better rise." But I found that neither could he rise.

Putting my hands under his arms, I attempted to lift him to his feet; but he clung to my knees, and forced his face back again into my lap. This taught me something. He had said that he could

not, and yet he was unwilling to give it up. More than that, I had had something of a revelation of the tremendous struggle that had been going on in that soul; for in lifting him I caught a glimpse of his face. It was flushed to fiery redness, and the perspiration stood in beads from his forehead to his throat. Was he stubborn? No; for he was fighting on my side, and not against me. Apparently he had made up his mind to stay there until the flesh should succumb to the spirit. Was he disobedient? No; for he was working toward the result, and for it, as fast as he could.

But such victories are not won in a flash, such results are not obtained without cost. The struggling and fighting to overcome his natural reticence in spiritual things, was at an expenditure of nerve

force which, directed in some other way, might have gained him the applause of the world for heroic accomplishment. But how often do children hear the world's "Well done!" for such a secret struggle as this? Indeed, it was evident that the petition, "Help me to do right," had ascended in burning thoughts, if not in formal words; for already God was helping him to do right in just this thing. The very heat of the fierce struggle was in itself the evidence that the prayer was answered even before it was uttered. The struggle was the strongest kind of an expression of prayer,—and God knew that long before I did.

Once again I attempted to raise him from my knees, and still he clung to them with a life-and-death grip. I could feel the waxing heat of his face,—of his whole

body. I could not but see in him the truest of heroes. Yet my heart went out to him in the deepest pity. Here was mental distress, heart-anguish, such as few men or women experience, or at least do not experience without the world's touch of sympathy. But for a child—!

I bent my head again to his, put my mouth to his ear, and whispered, "Just whisper it—very low; God can hear it." I lifted him easily, put my arms around him, drew his face close against mine, and waited, and—still there was no response. In a more familiar yet serious way, I said again, "Very low, now,"—and, with one final struggle, I heard him say "Help!" It was very, very low, almost inaudible, but just as good as, and better than, a loud voice that had come without effort.

He had indeed struggled victoriously.

That simple petition came easy to him ever after; but he never spoke it without seeming to be impressed with its peculiarly serious import. The victory of accomplishment, however, was not half so much to me—nor to him—as was the victory of struggle,—the true conquest of self, that shows itself in the determination to fight one's way through. Should I have reprimanded him at first for a refusal to speak when I had asked him? No! He had not refused; he had begun to comply at once. Another child might easily have spoken the petition, and, perhaps, easily forgotten it. But I would rather see him wrestling in real prayer, than merely repeating the form of prayer without the wrestling.

And now, on looking back to that evening hour when my child and I were alone

together, I can see how, in my danger of misunderstanding him, and so of causing "one of these little ones to stumble," I was permitted to catch a fresh glimpse into the soul-life of childhood. I saw prayer in the struggle to pray, and I learned how such a struggle itself is prayer. I gained a new view of the spirit of obedience.

III.

Would you know how to lead the child in this matter? Observe the child; he will teach you what to do.

FROEBEL.

There is an exquisite poetry in the spontaneous promptings of the unsophisticated spirit of the child. So far removed at times from our one-sided prejudiced views, so high above our low conventional standards, are the little one's intuitions of his new world.

JAMES SULLY.

A PROBLEM SOLVED.



NOT a few of our most perplexing problems would cease to exist as problems if we were more willing to bide our time and follow God's leadings—oftentimes through a little child. As it is, we are looking in the wrong place for their solution. We are looking at one thing, when we ought to be looking at another.

At what age should a child do this or that? Should I send him to day-school, to Sunday-school, to church, at three, four, five, six, nine, eleven,—at what age? At no age. The problem is not one of years, but of circumstance, of state, of condition.

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Each child is his own answer. You cannot solve the problem merely by an appeal to the calendar. But the child will solve it for you when you least expect it, if you will help him by understanding him. Let us see.

May days were passing and June days were coming. My boy was nearly five and a half years old,—old enough to go to Sunday-school, it seemed to me. Why not send him?

Well, he was rather a strange mixture of shyness and sociableness, of reticence and talkativeness, like a true child,

“A party-colored show of grave and gay,
Solid and light, short-sighted and profound.”

So long as he sat in the family pew he was happy; but could he endure being

left suddenly in the primary department among a little host of strangers? Hardly he,—no, not he!

And then, again, we should be away all summer, so it would not be worth while to arouse any opposition from the child by attempting to compel him to go just these few Sundays before July. An issue on this point raised now might give him a lasting hostility to the school idea, and then what? On the other hand, when he should return in the autumn, four or five months would have been added to his age, he would be less opposed to being left among strangers; and, on the whole, the opening of the fall season seemed the best time to begin. So the autumn it should be.

For months before this, the child-mind was being prepared for the supposed crisis. "Some day when you go to Sunday-

school," came into the conversation at odd but appropriate times,—not too often. That, in part, was the scheme.

Then came the terrible news of the Johnstown flood. It was announced in Sunday-school that a wagon would leave the door soon after the school closed, to convey packages of clothing and provisions to the railroad station. I hurried home, bundled up some clothing, and decided as quickly to give my boy an object-lesson or two by taking him back with me to the school-room.

It was a short walk, but long enough to give me time to explain what we were doing. The bundle was deposited in the library room, and we were about turning to leave when I remembered that wedges have a thin edge.

"Would you like to go upstairs," I said,

"and see the school-room where the little folks have their Sunday-school?" Yes, he would. Up we went, then down a long entry, then we pushed open a door, and there we stood in the presence of rows and rows, a rising succession, of empty benches, with very short legs and very low backs.

"This is where *you* will come some day," I said in a serio-comic attitude.

"Is this where John comes?" he asked.

"Yes,—and Stephen," I answered.

The "father of the man" pondered his situation for a few moments; the father of the boy pondered *his* situation as long and just as seriously. But the pondering of the man was not worth half so much as the pondering of the boy. No one will ever know just what vivid pictures, just what resolute thoughts, passed through

that child's mind as he stood there. But he at least gained some familiarity with the place. In fancy he doubtless saw companions, and strangers who might be companionable, ranged before him. He beheld himself as one of them. He had grown; he had far outrun those few passing moments. Age had nothing to do with his fitness to sit there. What were his years to him? He was, indeed, more than an hour older now than he was an hour ago.

The thin edge of the wedge,—had it entered? Maybe just a very little. Let time tell.

Another week passed away. Nothing special was said about the Sunday-school. But the father of the boy was still gathering strength for the fall campaign. Undoubtedly the child would take kindly to it in

September. He seemed interested in his visit to the vacant room. It were well if at such times we should do less planning and more responding. We might indeed profitably recall the words of Montaigne, "Let us permit Nature to take her own way a little ; she better understands her own affairs than we."

Another week rolled around. It was Sunday afternoon again, and time to prepare for school. As I was getting ready, my lover followed me from room to room. While there was nothing remarkable in his keeping me close in sight, yet there was something a little more than usual in his manner. If there was anything important on his mind, what was it ?

My confiding boy really found it necessary, this time, to muster strength to ask me a question. It was not often that he

needed to feel backward about coming to me with a question. The last thing in the world for a father to do is to disparage in his children the spirit of inquiry, or, indeed, to raise between them and him a barrier of any kind. And now, as I was about to depart, he, with that beautiful hesitancy of true and resolute courage, approached me, and said :

“Papa, I want to ask you something.”

“Yes, dear little boy,” I answered.
“What is it ?”

He stretched up both arms, and said, with blushing cheek :

“Lean down, papa, won't you ? I want to ask you something.”

I bent over toward him until he could clasp both arms around my neck and draw me farther down so that his warm lips touched my ear.

Very low he whispered, "Can I go to Sunday-school?"

O my little teacher! How should the father of a child answer the father of the man? My heart said "Yes;" my poor judgment almost said "No, not yet." My faltering tongue, God-led, followed my heart's wish and the wise and enthusiastic approval of the child's good mother. It was not many minutes before we were hastening up the street. My boy was going to Sunday-school without thinking just how many days past five he was. I wondered whether, in his childish innocence, he knew what he was undertaking. Perhaps he wondered whether, in my adult ignorance, I knew what he was accomplishing!

But that was not all. Of course he must sit in my class this Sunday. Better

take it gradually. He will not go up into the primary school yet, among strangers. So I thought. I did not know how much pondering and resolving he had done as he stood before those empty benches a week before. But he knew. His whole heart was fired. "Too little" should not stand in his way any longer, when he knew that he was big enough to do the right thing. He saw that he could sit on those benches with his feet touching the floor. They were evidently made for little men of his size. That, therefore, was his place. Any one as sensible as a child would rather be in place than out of place.

"Shall I take you upstairs with me?" said a whole-souled kidnapper of children's hearts,—an assistant superintendent,—as we were entering the church yard.

"I think I shall keep him downstairs with me to-day, thank you," I replied.

"Can't I go upstairs?" said my boy.

"I think you would rather not go up there to-day. Wouldn't you prefer to sit in my class this time?" I asked, foolishly obstructing the progress that the Spirit was making with him at every step.

"I should like to go up and sit with the little people," he replied timidly, but with evident earnestness. He was naturally deferential and obedient, but this time he felt that he was right,—as, in very truth, he was. No doubt he felt, too, that in doing more than I asked of him he was really doing no more than I would wish of him, if I thought him capable of accomplishing it. He knew that he was capable.

He took the kind hand of the assistant superintendent, who, with rollicking good-

nature, whisked him up the stairs to the little room whither his heart had preceded him,—where it had been lingering, indeed, since his first visit.

The story is told. He went again and again, until July dawned. Then we left home for our summer sojourn out of town. When the autumn came, he wanted to get back to the little benches, and to feel that he was part of the community again. Nor did his interest ever wane. Nothing but sickness, or perhaps the worst of winter weather, ever interfered with the regularity of his voluntary attendance.

That is the surface of the story. What lies under it, every one can see, to one extent or another, for himself. But when I think of my worrying and planning how to get a shy, tender-hearted, deep-souled, affectionate child to leave me for an hour

in Sunday-school; when I think of that problem hanging over me, and then see how easily, cheerily, and earnestly my child solved the problem before I had fairly got at it,—I cannot help thinking how often a little child could lead us, if only we were willing to be led by a little child.

Such problems are hard to solve, because the solution lies in an unsuspected direction. In this, as in many another case, there were two problems. One was mine; the other was his. I was anxious to know how to get him to see it his duty and to feel it his pleasure to go regularly to Sunday-school. He was anxious to know how to get me to see it my duty and to feel it my pleasure to let him go to Sunday-school.

Of the two problems his was the harder.

But had I not made such an unnecessary problem of him, he need not have made such a necessary problem of me. His, indeed, was the more serious and vital ; and in heroically and nobly solving his problem for himself, he unwittingly solved mine for me. There is more danger of a parent's hindering a child than of a child's hindering a parent. And the hindering that the parent can do is a thousand times more harmful than any hindering that can be done by the child.



IV.

IN children of a lively imagination, mental fear easily springs out of bodily fear, and this—which is never considered—even through dreams. . . . We should attend far more to the dreams of children than to those of mature persons especially on account of this difference,—that in ours resound the echoes of our childhood ; what then in theirs ? . . . To whom in subsequent dreams and fevers has not the same serpent form, the same misshapen tortuous monster, continually reappeared of which in his whole remembered life he had beheld no archetype ? Might not these shapes be buried remnants of old childhood's dreams which rise from the deep like sea-monsters, in the night ? . . . Nothing is more infectious than fear and courage ; but the parent's fear is doubled in the child ; for where the giant trembles, the dwarf must surely fall.

JEAN PAUL RICHTER.

BACK OF THE DREAM.



NE and one make two. That is one of the first things learned by a child, and one of the last things practically realized by an adult. "Putting this and that together" is as necessary a part of the logic of common life, as it is a fundamental principle of science. It is a key of keys.

A good many facts, or happenings, that have no seeming connection with one another, are radically and vitally one. In the ordinary intercourse with our fellow-men we are continually compelled to add the silent look to the spoken word; to

construe speech by character ; to summon our knowledge of man as an interpreter of the doings of men ; in short, to read between the lines,—to obtain a new result by putting this and that together. If we fail to do this, we fail to read the world aright ; we are not just and true.

If this be so in our relations with men and women whom we meet in the shop, the office, the street, the church, the parlor, how much more true must it be in our relations with those little folk “ whose exterior semblance doth belie ” their “ soul’s immensity,” and who, in the keenness of their observing, the soundness of their reasoning, and the depth of their feeling,

“ Have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither.”

Being detained, one evening, on the way home from my office, I was wondering, as

I opened the front door, whether it was too late to say good-night to the children. I do not miss that many nights in a year; for it is worth too much to me as well as to them.

My little boy of six had just crept into bed, when, at the sound of my foot on the stair, he leaped out, and, wildly flinging his arms in an ecstasy of delight, dashed into the hall, calling, "Papa! papa! papa!"

I shall never forget that dramatic little scene. I see the brightly lighted hall, the sudden dash of a figure in white out to the head of the stairway, then, before I reach the second floor, the dash back again to the room, crying "Papa! papa!" to tell his mother and sister, then out again to throw himself upon me and hold me as though he could never let me leave him again.

A warm greeting was to be expected—that was a daily occurrence; but such superlative hilarity, such excessive demonstrations of joy, seemed at first, even to me, his close companion by day and night, hardly to be accounted for.

Well, after getting back into bed again, we had our jolly good-night, and our soberer good-night, our hugs and kisses, interspersed with questions as to what had become of me, with a tightening of my lover's arms around my neck when he talked about his long waiting and my long coming. Then, in due time, I left him to pursue his own way to the land of dreams.

The next time that we found each other was when the milk-wagon and the ice-cart rattled us both back to the land of realities. Before we had fairly rubbed the sleep

from our eyes, little arms were around my neck again, and a warm cheek was pressed against my forehead.

"Papa," said the deep-souled boy, "do you know what I dreamed last night?"

"No, I don't. What was it?"

"I dreamed," said he, "that I saw you crossing a railroad track, and the train was coming"—

"Did you, you dear little fellow? And were you afraid that papa might be hurt or killed?"

The tightening of his embrace would have signified his thought, even though his "yes" had not come from a place very deep down in his throat.

Dreams mean a good deal sometimes, and sometimes they seem to mean little or nothing. Perhaps if we knew everything we should see that they always mean

something. However this may be, I was not long in finding what lay back of the dream that night.

There was his extraordinary demonstration on the previous evening; here was this horrible dream. And then, there was his exquisite tenderness in relating it. It was easy enough to put this and that together, and yet I know that only too often do parents forget to put things together to discern the hidden motives of their children's actions. And now for the proof of my secret conclusions.

"Were you afraid," I asked, "when papa was late coming home last evening, that something had happened to him?"

"Yes,"—and the arms that had relaxed a little spasmodically tightened again. I had taken the precaution, on leaving in the morning, to say that I should be late that

evening, so there was no need for him to worry. Moreover, there was no reason to imagine me in danger from a railroad. Why heed the childish dream?

Anxiety in the waking hour often begets a dream of calamities or horrors, although the form of calamity may have no necessary connection with the preceding anxiety. If the child had been busy with his toy railroad, or if for any reason his ideal danger, his ideal horror, was a railroad accident, the dream begotten of a worrying fear could naturally have taken the form that it did.

A dream is a dream, and more than a dream. My boy's dream was his revealer. Out of his torment I learned the depth of a child's forebodings. I learned that they take a form and come at times and in ways little suspected. I learned that children's

spontaneous expressions of personal love for and delight in us, often have a depth of meaning of which we have no fair appreciation. I had only to "put this and that together" to gain a new and clearer and more profound knowledge of child nature, and a higher sense of respect for and responsibility to the world of childhood.

"O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn."

- A sense of fear is a necessary element in the character of a dependent being. The man who never knows what fear is, knows little what dependence is ; and the man who knows not what dependence is, has no appreciation of the right relations between himself and God. When in the

middle of a summer night a child is suddenly awakened by a crash of thunder overhead, and clings with spasmodic grasp to his father, and hides his head under his shoulder, the child shows his sense of absolute dependence. He may be really no more dependent upon his father than at other times. But his fear has given him a new and quickened sense of his dependence. And it is the expression of that dependence that comes with grateful sense to the true father, even while he suffers in sympathy with the mental agony of his child. Is it not so in our relations to God?

Wives and mothers, husbands and fathers, are not alone in their anxious times of watching and waiting, fearing and hoping. We do not expect children who are too young to read newspapers, or who have never had personal knowledge of mortal

accidents, to worry by imagining such things. But in the heart of the child there is often a suppressed anxiety, a gloom of ill-foreboding, an unexpressed dread of such dangers as children are supposed to know but little of, much less to brood over; and in the action of the child there is often a meaning of personal devotion which we are dull in discerning and slow to honor. These truths lie under that evening joy for me. This lesson stands back of the midnight dream.

V.

The real misery was simply and solely the horrible feeling of not belonging anywhere ; not knowing what a moment might bring forth in the way of treatment from others ; never being sure which impulse it would be safer to follow, to retreat or to advance, to speak or to be silent, and often overwhelmed with unspeakable mortification at the rebuff of the one or the censure of the other.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.



PRETTY little box of mottled wood it was, highly polished, with rounded edges, a key underneath, and a little metal slide in front to stop and start it with. It played two tunes,—“Home, Sweet Home,” and “Listen to the Mocking-Bird.”

To my shy and easily embarrassed boy of six, social formalities were a natural hardship, yet it was quite evident that he often fought himself manfully in the effort to do the approved thing. That was the case one afternoon when, with his little box in hand, he entered the parlor with

the manifest intention of making himself sociable in the presence of mama and papa, who were entertaining a lady there. His conscious lack of ease would be in a measure relieved, he evidently felt, by taking his pet music-box with him. It was probably all to him that the twirling of a stick is to a nervous man—and more. He loved that little instrument, and nothing pleases a child more than to have the grown folk admire what he admires, and love what he loves.

It was evident, however, as he entered the room, that he did not quite know how far he ought to venture or how much attention he could expect for his instrument.

The good motherly lady, who was calling, had managed to draw out monosyllabic greetings, and was at a loss to know

how further to proceed with the reserved little would-be host, when I said:

"Come and show Mrs. A—— your music-box."

"Have you got a music-box?" the lady asked. "When did you get it?"

"Christmas," said my boy, somewhat above a whisper.

"Let me see it; does it play? Can you wind it yourself?" said she kindly.

"Yes," he replied, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the nearest ears; and advancing with more confidence, now that interest was centering on the music-box, he added, "I'll make it play for you."

With that one of the airs started off at double-quick from beneath the bird's-eye maple lid, and for a few moments we all listened. Then the good lady made some appreciative remarks about it, and, with-

out stopping to take new breath, began to talk about things irrelevant to the occasion—as the boy saw the occasion. So he wandered shyly around again, his musical pet in hand, playing all the time, until he became practically nobody to the older folk who held possession of the parlor.

My boy's emotional nature was very sensitive and keen. And he had a singular kind of reticence, or reserve, about him, which even his school-teachers marked as almost abnormal. Of course, this put him at a disadvantage. When he did a formal thing, he did it at great cost, even though he did it only by half. But scarcely any one knew to what credit he was entitled, and certainly no casual observer knew how little he merited reproof.

Now, had not his pet music-box been a true friend to him? Had it not taken

him into the presence of a stranger? and was his course not approved? Had it not done most of the talking for him? His mama and papa were fond of it too, and they had hit upon the right thing to help him forward when they encouraged him to exhibit its charms in the presence of their guest.

But not many weeks elapsed before all such conclusions built upon that day's experiences were strangely set at naught. It was not in the parlor this time. The guest was an old acquaintance of papa's, —a minister who had come to take dinner. He had been absent in Europe for some years, and was, by reason of his natural brightness, enriched by varied experiences, an exceptionally engrossing companion.

The reverend doctor and mama and

papa were grouped in a sort of triangular circle, the doctor himself monopolizing the hour with his bewitching monologue.

The library, even more than the parlor,



was the children's place, and it was a place to be sociable in. It was more than half a

nursery, although not nominally *the* nursery. A little desk and table and children's chairs were there, railroads were

often laid, and many a train was wrecked under the shadow of the bookcases and the family center-table. Steamboats plowed the imaginary waters of the carpet, and junior grocers weighed sugar and hominy from the drawers and boxes of the mimic grocery-store. Where papa and mama were, the little folks liked to be; and where the voices of childhood were heard, and the hands of childhood were busy, papa and mama liked to be.

More than the minister's funny stories and weird adventures, more than books in the case or pictures on the wall, there was just one other object in that room,—besides the desk under the window and the watch in his pocket,—that to my boy was pre-eminently interesting and dear to his heart. It was the little music-box.

How he longed to show it! And such

a visitor as that was entitled to see his pet. But how could a diffident, reticent child secure to the music-box its due share of attention from the all-absorbing stranger? And how could he go single-handed and alone into the presence of the strange clergyman, and be reasonably easy and polite?

There was a shy wandering back and forth, around and about,—which no one noticed, of course. Presently there might have been heard the tinkling of a strain of music in the distance. With flushed cheeks and uncertain action the little hero brought his idol to the table near which the trio were gathered. He looked coyly at the visitor, then at me, then at the dear little music-maker.

It would take more than a music-box to draw off the attention of such a group

when once the doctor was fairly under way with one of his inimitable narrations.

I turned to my boy, who was conscious of his difficulty in doing what he believed would be as acceptable in the library as it had been in the parlor, and said softly, but with what perhaps might have seemed to him a shade of impatience in my tone :

“Please don’t bring that here now.”

He could not quite understand me,—no wonder!—and said diffidently and innocently :

“What, papa?”

“You see the doctor is talking. Please take away your music-box.”

My blameless boy, embarrassed by being called upon to obey an order that seemed to be given in the very teeth of what he reasonably believed to be his social duty, and hurt by my seeming lack of

sympathy with his effort to be agreeable, took up his little instrument and silently walked away with it.

Why he should, with his painful diffidence, fight his way toward our exclusive circle, with timid step, with flushed cheek and shy glance, I could not for the moment tell,—because, perhaps, I happened to be, somewhat selfishly, otherwise interested.

How should he know that the minister's monologue might be more absorbing and exclusive than the conversation of the kind-hearted lady had been? Had he not been invited once to introduce his music-box to a visitor? Ought he not to know enough to do so again without being told? Were not the external circumstances virtually the same? Would not the internal principles of action be virtually the same?

Alas for the children! What heavenly genius they are endowed with, that enables them at last to triumph, more or less, over the "paralyzing power of education"!

And the parent asks, Were not the cases different? Ought the guest to have been interrupted? Ought not the child to be trained in distinctions?

Never forget such a case until you have made those very distinctions clear. The child's puzzled sense, his embarrassed look, his flushed face, his mental torsion, his emotional tension, his pain of conscience unjustly inflicted, ought to haunt the parent like a ghost until he has told the child what that child has a right to know.

It takes discernment to see just how far our presence is desirable or is an intru-

sion. Grown-up persons themselves do not always learn that. But my child appreciated the reasonableness of my explanation when it was made to him soon after. Children who are accustomed to being fairly treated are sure of being more reasonable than their elders are. And I shall not soon forget my boy's grateful sense of satisfaction when he found that we had not meant to be either inconsistent or unkind.

Is it an open question whether the group about the table was not more in error in refusing, or, what is worse, in neglecting, to receive the child, than the child was in modestly offering to be received?

VI.

Children have as much a mind to show . . . that their own good actions come from themselves . . . as any of the proudest of you grown men, think of them as you please.

LOCKE.

The will, that safeguard in the hour of temptation, does not begin to grow until definite choice is made by the individual. . . . The creating of the desires for right conduct makes all the difference between voluntary and forced obedience. . . . When this holding of the ever-advancing ideal before the child in so attractive a manner as to draw his affections toward it is once understood, the mother or teacher can lead the child to will to do almost anything. . . . Little by little will come the realization that free-will is not the liberty to do whatever one likes, but the power to compel one's self to obey the laws of right.

ELIZABETH HARRISON.



The True Conquest

J WILL conquer that child, no matter what it may cost him!" boasts the misguided parent. But suppose the parent should say, "I will help that child to conquer himself, no matter what it may cost me."

Child first, and parent second: this is the root principle. In age, in strength, in experience, in judgment, in authority, of course the parent is first,—is the head. But this headship is simply a means to an end. The end is the child's growth in the direction of his own individuality.

A child cannot even be taught that he is subordinate or accessory to his parent in any respect, unless that parent's motive in so teaching him takes rise in the truth that the parent is in ultimate purpose subordinate and accessory to the child. "For my child's sake" is the only parental motto that will bring the child to adopt "For my parents' sake" as his motto. The surest way to have the parent first in the eyes of the child, is for the child to be first in the eyes of the parent.

All that a parent is for, in the matter of teaching and training his child, is to help that child to do the right thing rightly,—that is, because it is right. The parent is accessory or auxiliary to the child's development of his own powers in a right—a God-ward—direction.

Any seemingly complicated issue with

a child will be simplified by regarding it from this one point. Parent and child are to meet at that point in a joint effort on the part of both to do God's right, and not on the part of either for mere superiority or mastery. The only principle that works under all conditions is, not the principle of arbitrary parental mastery, but of parental aid and service. This is our Father's way of dealing with his children. He threatens no compulsion, but throws the responsibility on them by giving them a right of choice. But in this exercise God is ready to lead, to guide, to restrain, to counsel; so must the earthly parent be.

Will this principle work in real life?

There was real life in profusion on a certain Sunday morning in May. The

trees were alive, the sod was alive, the sky was a living blue. The honeysuckle clung to the trellis at the corner of the porch, while it waved its myriad arms to the life-giving spirit of the morning breeze. And my boy was alive; he loved life as he lived love. He could run and climb and jump, even if not quite so well nor with such full-souled joy as he could nestle, fondle, and caress.

Nature was all in tune with the little man on that day when he was almost midway between seven and eight years old. Nature was growing, so was he; Nature's life was beautiful, so was his; she was gentle, so was he; she was vigorous, so was he; Nature was God's, so was he. Could such a boy willingly exchange these allurements of the eye, this music of the moving breeze, this sweet-scented

sward starred with buttercup and daisy, for the restraints of an unintelligible service within the dead walls and under the hard ceiling of a church made and managed only by grown folks?

But the enchantment that bound him was the very thing that made us want to loose him and have him go with us—just that inspiring day—to church. This was a thing seldom pressed upon him so long as he was such a regular and ever-willing Sunday-school scholar. Still he sometimes accompanied us to the preaching service, of his own choice. To-day his little sister was going, and for the second time in our lives we hoped to see our pew with the whole family in it. So it was proposed to him.

The little fellow could not quite make up his mind, as he was dressing for break-

fast, whether to go or not. But stepping out on the porch awhile after, there seemed to be every inducement to spend the morning in the free and fragrant air.

As ten o'clock drew near, I sent him word that I should like to see him in the library. He bounded up the stairs. He doubtless knew that I should renew the proposal to him; but love brought him, be my request what it might.

"I don't want to go to church to-day, papa," he said earnestly yet good-naturedly, as he approached me.

"But," I replied, "it is such a beautiful day, and sister is anxious to go and to have you with us; however, you must do just what seems best. I want you always to do, not what you want to do, but what you think God wants."

He hesitated awhile, and repeated, defer-

entially yet entreatingly, "But I don't want to go to church to-day."

"Then maybe it is best for you to stay at home; and, if so, I don't want to insist on your going. Only, you know it is not so much what we want to do, as what it is best to do, that we ought to consider."

I turned to my reading, while he sat close beside me buried in his own thoughts. Perhaps I was reading him even more than I was my book.

A marked feature of his individuality was his delight in my will, and often in displaying a certain gladness of heart in preferring my preferences. Yet he was a real child, with the surface caprices and spontaneous impulses, as well as the deeper likes and longings, that often seem so puzzling and yet add so much to the witchery and interest of child nature.

After a little pause, during which I seemed to be reading, and he seemed to be thinking, he resumed in perhaps lower and yet more entreating tone, "I don't want to go to church to-day, papa."

So, seeing that he was still unsatisfied, I added :

"I know you are always very good about it; you go to Sunday-school, and I know my little fellow gets tired sometimes when he goes twice a day, so I seldom ask it. Although mama and sister and I want your company so much this morning, maybe it is better for you to stay here."

Indeed, the matter would have been dropped before this, had it not been that I saw an unusual opportunity of teaching him a principle that must be of value to him all through life. He could be saved,

too, from the pain of a needless regret, which I knew was inevitable with him if he remained at home. He could not have seen us go off without him, under the circumstances, and exult in his own release. A true lover like himself hates even his own triumph over his loved one. So when once again he repeated his desire to remain at home, I asked:

“What did I say we ought to do,—what we want?”

“*What is best*,” he promptly replied.

“Yes, that is it; even papa cannot always do what he would like to do,—none of us can. So now I leave you to decide just what would be right and best to do, and I will not ask you to do anything else. If you feel that you do not know, ask God to tell you; he will help you when you don't know what to do.”

So saying, I left the room to prepare for church.

It was not many minutes after that his manly figure approached me through the half-open door, and my arch-lover stood squarely facing me. With upturned countenance and with all the soul-strength that underlies deep emotion, in a low voice he said,

“Papa, I’m going to church!”

I put my arm around him, and together we walked to the front room. Then I asked him :

“Did you really think it was right and best for you to go to church with us this morning?”

“Yes, papa,” he answered, tenderly patting my cheek, and laying his noble head against my breast.

I gave him all the outward signs of my

gratification in his action that I knew how. But it was not fair to leave him there. No victory is complete with the victor's gratitude left out. "He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, . . . and I will write upon him the name of my God." Had he not overcome himself? Was there not reason for gratitude to Him who had promised to write upon my boy the name of his God?

"Let us kneel here and thank God for helping you through," I said.

That was one of the joyous moments of my life,—the praise pæan of his own self-conquest, not of any conquest of mine. I had given him the principle to decide by, then thrown the responsibility chiefly on him. He exercised the choice, and made the decision. In that act new strength

was added to his character, a new source of joy to his life.

The May day that dawned so beautifully grew more beautiful indoors as well as out. It was a proud moment when my little conqueror took the hand of his sister, for whom he had always such a knightly devotion, and led her up the church aisle. As we four sat together, I could think of little else than his conquest. I felt that the one question, "What I want, or what is best?" would be a life question and his life guide. I knew that the foundation-stone had been laid for a new "pillar in the temple of my God."

Another Sunday came,—only one week later. The conqueror this time was fighting for his life, a victim of diphtheria. Three days later, when the battle was

reaching its crisis, there came a time when he must be asked to do that which was a torment to his sensitive nature, and a torture to his weakened frame.

“Please take this now,” said his nurse.

He recoiled, turning his head away, and spasmodically clasping both hands over his mouth. What should be done? It might be a question of life and death.

Despite his intensely sensitive organization, which made many things very hard for him to do that another might smile at, he had a right side of approach; and that side was the side of right. This was no time to agitate him by compulsion. It was not so much an unwilling spirit that he exhibited as the weakness of the flesh—a physical revulsion at the prospect of that which had at last become unendurable. Could he who had so lately con-

quered his spirit, summon that spirit to a conquest of the flesh? In other words, could he put that principle which he had learned less than two weeks ago into practice in this time of crisis?

I went to his bedside, leaned over him, and said:

“Dear little fellow, we don’t want to trouble you; but you know how we learned to say, ‘Is it right? is it best?’ Now this *is* best for you.”

Just a moment’s thought, and then, relaxing his constrained attitude, he turned, and, looking placidly up into my face, responded, with quick though voiceless accent, “All right!”

The little conqueror has conquered once again!

Only a few hours later, in the stillness of midnight, when the stertorous breathing

had become easier, he fell sweetly into sleep as he lay on his side, with his left hand under his round, white cheek, and the tapering fingers of his chubby right hand doubled in careless grace under his chin. How often we had seen him, before, in that favorite position! How more than calm, how more than sweet, slumber seems now!

The little conqueror sleeps,—he whose last act was a conquest of self through a decision for the right,—a conquest for ever and ever. Sweet be thy sleep!

O fathers, live close, live close to your boys! There need be no battle between you and them if you will but help them in their own battle for the right.

The Sabbath comes again. The green-sward is still starred with daisy and butter-

cup; the trees are full and rich with new life; I see the honeysuckle joyfully waving its myriad arms. Beautiful life is here, but a beautiful little life is—where?

“To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.”



VII.

Nothing, perhaps, has been more misunderstood than childhood.

JAMES SULLY.

Who may not see that a child lies under so many restrictions, on account of its natural weakness, as to acknowledge it barbarous to add to this restraint that of our caprices? . . . How subject are those who judge precipitately of children to be egregiously deceived! They often betray, in this, less judgment than the children of whom they judge.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

To what genius fed on tears shall we some day owe that most touching of all elegies,—the tale of tortures borne silently by souls whose tender roots find stony ground in the domestic soil, whose earliest buds are torn apart by rancorous hands, whose flowers are touched by frost at the moment of their blossoming?

BALZAC.

A PROPHET OF SILENCE.

HOW silent it is—childhood!
The children—how noisy they are! Inquisitive and garrulous, they are sometimes out of time and out of tune; laughter runs riot with them, and their sudden shrieks and prolonged crying disturb and alarm the neighborhood. How roistering, rollicking, boisterous they are—the children!

Yet how silent it is—childhood!

The very word “infant” means “speech-

less," and every child remains an infant, in one degree or another, long after the period of so-called infancy is past. As in other things, so in this, not all children represent in an equal degree the silence of childhood, nor do they all equally apprehend the abstract idea of childhood as a state or stage.

The truth that childhood is a condition of life repressed, misunderstood, defenseless, doubtless impresses itself upon children mainly as a feeling, a "vague unrest" rather than a well-defined intellectual concept. Yet it is not invariably so vague and ill-defined as we might suppose. When in her sixth year, my little girl, without apparent cause or provocation, shrewdly observed, "People don't know that little children are good unless they keep them. Why, mama, people always

think children are bad until they live with them; then they find out that they can be good."

Of some things we may be sure. A child knows when he is regarded as a toy, a lap-dog, a mere source of amusement or butt for ridicule, or even a subject for slights and deceptions. He knows when he is treated unjustly; and he knows that his superiors are more likely to demand politeness from him than they are to expect to be polite to him. Conclusions of this sort a child arrives at directly and fairly.

Children as individuals do not like to be judged or condemned because they belong to a class, any better than the ex-convict, the Indian, the Chinaman, the Russian Jew, or the negro does. A child feels that he has a place in humanity as well as in childhood. He wants the in-

dividual to stand upon his own merits, and not to fall under a general class condemnation determined by mere years.

The unfairest way to condemn any individual is to condemn him because, without volition of his own, he belongs to a certain class. When a mother reprimands a boy by saying, "Look at your hands! I always did hear that boys' hands were never clean;" or, "Don't make such a racket! Boys never can do anything quietly,"—she blames him, practically, for alleged essentials of his sex and age, and so denies to him the hope of his doing better. The child naturally reasons, "I am a boy, and, if boys are always so, I must be so too;" or he silently chafes under an assertion which he knows is too sweeping to be true. Many a boy who would strive to do better, has been dis-

couraged and permanently injured by being condemned, not for what faults *he* has, but for what faults *boys* have. He judges his judge, albeit his judgment is silent; he knows he has little, if any, redress.

While children recognize the rights of their elders over them, they also recognize—more often than they are supposed to—the broader view of rights between man and man. They recognize such a thing as “fair play” entirely apart from considerations of age or size, but they plead the cause in which childhood is their client, by the pathos of silence. “God bless their dear, patient souls!” exclaims Helen Hunt Jackson. “If men and women brought to bear on the thwartings and vexations of their daily lives, and their relations with each other, one-hundredth part of the sweet acqui-

escence and brave endurance which average children show, under the average management of average parents, this world would be a much pleasanter place to live in than it is."

A child easily recognizes the right or wrong of his own punishment, as, indeed, he keenly, though silently, criticises the methods of the parental government. What a child speaks critically is but a tithe of what he observes. "The next time you do that," said a father, "you shall leave the table." "It's 'the next time,' and 'the next time,' and 'the next time,'" replied the child, pleasantly, "and you never do it." "If you do that again," said the mother to that same child, "I'll punish you." "Oh, well! if you just don't say that, I will come right," answered the boy, good-naturedly implying that what he did was done not

maliciously, but inadvertently. He recognized a difference in the quality of the same act according to its motive.

And so it is all through. If it were a child's place to train his parents, he would be more likely to be sound in method, discriminating in judgment, and effective in his criticisms, within the limits of his experience, than parents are within the wider limits of theirs. It is hardly to be wondered at that a child occasionally feels like offering counsel to a parent in the matter of his own training.

It is interesting to note, just in this connection, that "in Labrador and Newfoundland the dogs trained by children are admitted to be the best and the most easily driven; hence, strange as it may appear, to the children is committed the care and bringing up of the young ani-

mals." This means simply that the young best understand the young.

It is not, therefore, that children are never noisy, but rather that childhood is, because of natural limitations and conventional obstructions, the silent stage of existence concerning itself. But there is an involuntary expression of nature which can be seen only by observing the individual child keenly, sympathetically, judicially.

There is, then, a principle that may fairly be known as *the child for childhood*. There are children whose lives demonstrate a certain consciousness of the needs and longings of childhood, by reason of their excessive reticence and sensitiveness.

Such a child was my own boy, who was indeed a veritable prophet of silence be-

cause his silence spoke so forcibly. He was a signal illustration of the principle of the child for childhood,—which, indeed, his own silences first suggested to me. Between him and his parents there was indeed little real silence. Much of what he did not express he knew was understood. And yet I can look back and see where we may have failed to rise to the full understanding of him, and so may not have done him absolute justice.

When God said to Jeremiah, "I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," the prophet answered, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." But in our little prophet, silence itself speaks.

It is our hero's fifth year. One of the periodical clearing-up times had come

around. A proposal having been made to him to give some of his broken toys to a little child of poverty who hardly knew what it was to handle a toy, broken or unbroken, he answered with quick sympathy, "But, mama, how can a poor boy use them if I can't?" It is not against my point that this was both philosophical and kind. I have already indicated that the principle of the child for childhood arises rather out of heart-power than head-power. And the illustrative value of these incidents is more in their collective trend than in any individual inference.

One night, after he had seen a military parade, bedtime found him very much wearied. He had put his willing head upon the pillow, and said his last affectionate "good-night." Then when all was

still, and parades were almost a forgotten thing to me, a low voice from the pillow said, in half soliloquy, "I saw some of them stand just like my shoers." Something in this just approaches pathos. Does it not seem faintly to shadow forth childhood's justification of affection for its toys? To their shame be it said that with many parents such a justification is necessary. For, without consulting the child, they compel him to part with those favorite old playthings which are closely bound to his heart, and are more valued than many a new purchase can be. He is often compelled to look to those very toys for that comfort and sympathy for which he looks elsewhere in vain. The playthings are, in a sense, more real than the reality they represent. The "shoers" fix the standard for the soldiers. This phase of child-

nature is most beautifully and pathetically
pictured by Coventry Patmore :

My little son, who looked from thoughtful eyes,
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobeyed,
I struck him, and dismissed
With hard words, and unkissed,—
His mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darkened eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-veined stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with
careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.

Can literature show a truer and more touching picture of silent childhood seeking sympathy than that?

I see my boy standing as a prophet not merely because, being a child, he was a representative of the silence of childhood, but because he was in a singularly extreme way a silent child. In the one matter of the expression of his affections, he was anything but undemonstrative. To every visitor in the household he was, in this, a study. But until he was well into his sixth year, although he would, like others, call his playmates by name, it was difficult for him deliberately to name any person or place on demand. This was, in fact, a species of "stage-fright,"—a condition to which most persons, young or old, are, in one degree or another, liable; and it is a condition to be regarded with

the utmost patience and tenderness in a child.

Later, when he became a Sunday-school and day-school boy, he was seldom or never observed to take part in any general oral exercise, although, rather oddly, in some degree he overcame the difficulty in individual recitation. Yet he was talkative, inquisitive, an indefatigable player, jovial, popular, and loved by his playmates in the school and about the neighborhood. His teachers witness that he not only had an intense appreciation of a joke, but that the enjoyment was in no wise diminished when it was turned on himself.

Even his little sister, three years younger than he, showed her appreciation of his reserve, when, one evening, several months after he left us, she was singing a little song with her mother at the piano. At a

certain point the singers clap hands; and there she recalled that her brother never would clap his, adding with pensive sympathy: "But I don't think brother didn't *want* to clap his hands; he would do it by himself, but he just didn't like to do it when you and papa were there." How truly did this little girl of less than five stand also for the principle of the child for childhood! She was not too young to understand his silence and to plead his cause. Are some of the rest of us too old to understand it?

All this excessive reserve and seclusion of self refers, however, only to deliberate action. Under spontaneous impulse my boy has been known to run for a policeman, and entreat him to come and take charge of a supposed evil-doer.

As he did not speak his own name,

still more were the names "God" and "Jesus" entirely unspoken unless they came in a regular set phrase, as a prayer or hymn, which carried him unconsciously over the difficulty. Indeed, I had failed to get him to display any hearty interest in the idea of God or in the Saviour, although I have since found that, at the times when he seemed least impressed or interested, he was absorbing truth. Truly does Wordsworth appreciate this phase of silence, when he thus addresses a child :

"If thou appear'st untouched by solemn
 thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine.
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
 And worshipest at the temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not."

And yet the most reticent will express his deepest interests in some way. Months

after he had left us we found a little blank-book given to him by his maid at Christmas. On a page in this little book he had printed "God is love. He loves lambs." We should have been startled to hear him speak this; we ought not to be amazed that one who worshiped "at the temple's inner shrine" wrote it where no one ever saw it during his life.

What did open his lips was the simple discovery or realization that Jesus had been a child. It had been problematical why a boy so imaginative, so full of sentiment and heart-power, should seem so irresponsible to religious conversation and teaching. But the true chord was touched when we reached the New Testament part of his "Bible Pictures," in the course of our Sunday evening readings. As soon as his eye fell on the picture of the baby

Jesus lying in the manger,—or “little cot-bed,” as he called it,—a new era opened for him. Immediately he began to ask questions, and to show a depth of interest in divine affairs that was altogether startling. Jesus had been a child! This discovery led him captive.

The next night, after he was snugly in bed, he reverted to the topic again. The “little Jesus” was what he wanted to know about. The name “Jesus” did not even obstruct him in his effort to know more of this God-man of whom he had long heard so much, but who, as only a few hours ago he realized through a little picture, was once a real child like himself. And when his mother, lying by him, asked what she should sing to him, he said, “Sing about Jesus loves little children.” I afterward went to him, and found him

full of the subject. When I spoke of Jesus as a child, he showed how he was affected by hugging me close to him, and displaying a power agitating him from within. Next morning, on waking, he talked about Jesus again. He wanted to know whether *Jesus helped people when he was a boy*. I could not get him to show so much interest in our Lord's adult life; he always reverted to his childhood.

This was the expression of the child for childhood. But the expression was virtually silent, or, to say the least, indirect. There was no plea, the sympathetic interest was a matter to be read definitely between rather than in the lines. It makes plainer his devotion, even down to his last illness, to the two hymns, "I think, when I read that sweet story of old," and "Around the throne of God in heaven."

So, too, when he heard us talking of persons he knew not of, he would ask tenderly, "Have they any little people there?" He seldom, if ever, used the word "children;" "little people" expressed more; it expressed the fact that they are people and have the rights of personality, and that they are little and inexperienced, and must be judged accordingly.

As the time drew near for my boy to put on trousers, he displayed an antipathy to the proposed change, in spite of every advantage that could be pictured to him. When he went, obediently, to be measured, the tailor told him that he was a curiosity,—a boy who did not want to be promoted in that way. After some weeks he secretly revealed to his mother his fear that this sacrifice of his exterior

personality might alienate his little sister ; or, as he expressed it, "I am afraid that sister won't like me any more." While his sister was a child, he would rather be a child to her. Passing into the trouser state was like passing out of childhood, and there was at least one child who needed him—his sister. Probably no one of all his adult censors could have guessed that a motive like that underlay the child's objecting. His sister was just half his age. But when he put the trousers on, and she approved them, he was as proud of them as ever a boy could be. Not for a day would he go back to frocks.

Passing over the many indications of the next three years, until he was in his eighth year, I come to an incident in the record that is a fitting sequel to what has already been related.

I was reading to him about Jesus and the doctors in the temple. He looked intently at the picture, and then asked: "But isn't he God?"

I replied that he was.

"Then," said he, "how could they be old men?"

Not seeing the point he was making, I answered: "Jesus was only a boy, about twelve years old."

"But how could that be?" he said. "Isn't he God?"

I then saw that his difficulty must be that God, who created man, could not be younger than men; and, on questioning him, he admitted the difficulty.

After a few words of help from me over that hard place, he looked thoughtful a moment, then came to the point that was really the vital one with him, and said:

"He was eight; wasn't he?"—meaning that Jesus was, at one time, a boy about his own age. That short and simple question was immensely suggestive to me, for this was a child's interest in childhood in so far as he knew childhood.

My boy was always unhappy if a gift was brought to him without something being simultaneously brought to his sister; and he would seldom, if ever, raise his hand to strike in his own defense. Wordsworth might have known him :

"This model of a child is never known
To mix in quarrels; that were far beneath
Its dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er
As generous as a fountain; selfishness
May not come near him."

When taunted once at school, in the hope of provoking him, the silent little hero—so his teachers tell me—courageously

stood his ground, and simply said "I don't fight." Yet on another occasion he chivalrously stepped with flushed face to the defense of his sister when he felt that she was wronged. Cherishing ill-feeling, or retaliating a wrong or meanness against himself, was altogether foreign to him; for his whole nature was generous and sympathetic, although so reserved, so seclusive of its best portion.

Although keeping strict silence about itself, the impulses and aspirations of this little prophet of childhood showed themselves sometimes best in action. Yet even the action was left to be discovered by us rather than to be disclosed by direct purpose of his own.

It is springtime. The sweetness of bud and blade has loaded the air, which is

alive with the merry voices of boys and girls.

But the company on our corner is not quite complete. A boy two years younger than my own is down, in a neighboring home, with scarletina. Yet the play in the street goes on. Our prophet, with little to say about his sick comrade, knows, from his own experience, that a sick child likes to have something in bed with him to while away the time. Maybe his little friend might suffer from the want of such entertainment.

And now the retiring and sensitive prophet of silence steals away, unbidden and unseen, with his little purse to a neighboring store, and, in spite of his shy reserve, purchases a yellow toy Easter chicken like his own. No one sees him go alone, perchance with timid step and

blushing face, or maybe with the rush of impulse, to the door of his playmate's home. None but the servant who opens the door to him hears his faintly voiced request to "give that to John to play with."

No one sees him on this beautiful, quiet errand but the Spirit that led him to find fellowship in the child Jesus; the Spirit that roused him to ask whether Jesus "helped people when he was a boy;" that gave him joy in the hymn that tells "how He called little children as lambs to his fold." It was this Spirit that moved him to realize what the children might be if only they were understood as they were by Him who told grown-up disciples that it was only by becoming as little children that they could enter the kingdom of heaven.

Two or three weeks went by. The little

sick boy was out again among the voices at the corner. But the voices were quieter now, and there was an air of reverence and a suggestion of something not loudly spoken on the street. The tender-hearted little lover of his kind was not among them. The voice of the prophet of silence was silent forever. The noble form, the fleet foot, the gentle spirit, were gone.

Then, in a casual way, we heard of this silent deed. But we shall never know more. How spontaneous, how secluded, how solitary, it was! How far removed from the expectation of praise or reward! This was not the boy shouting and laughing at play, but it was the voice of the child for childhood,—the silence of the prophet for the silent.

Now out of this last long silence I hear two voices, as of the deep calling unto the

deep. One is the voice of the child for childhood ; and the other is the voice of childhood's first Friend, who came into the world as a child to win the love and lead the lives of children.



VIII.

This, you see, is in our narrow world
A day of sorrow. I have here a charge. . . .
A little mourner whom it is my task
To comfort.

WORDSWORTH.

The trials and sorrows of children and young people have not always had the recognition they deserve from parents and teachers. . . . Every burden of life—and life's burdens seem many—rests at its heaviest on a child's nature.

Ten children are loved by their parents where one child has his parent's sympathy. . . . Among those children who are not called to suffer from actual unkindness on the part of their parents, there is no greater cause of unhappiness than the lack of parental sympathy. . . . In his joys, as in his sorrows, a true child wants some one to share his feelings rather than to guide them.

H. CLAY TRUMBULL.

THE UNCONSCIOUS TRIBUTE.



CHILDHOOD has its sorrows; and a child's sorrow is a child's tribute. It is a tribute to the loved and lost, not only, but to the depth, constancy, and faithfulness of childhood itself. And the tribute is the more beautiful because it is so unconscious and spontaneous.

Because of this unconsciousness and innocence, no sorrow—as no death—has in it so much of the element of pathos as that of a child.

A child does not carve epitaphs, nor build monuments nor pen memorials; he seeks not relief through conscious expression or deliberate display of grief. He pleads not for sympathy through conventionalities,—the dress of mourning, the isolation from society, the darkened house, the silenced musical instrument. He is innocent of the adult's tormenting affliction of showing by prescribed rules that he is afflicted.

The child carries his hurt heart out into the sunshine, that it may get some life out of the light. The conventionalized adult mourner carries his into the closed house, that he may get more death out of the darkness, and add an artificial gloom to the natural sadness. He does this largely because his critical neighbor prescribes it,—although the noisy crowd, the gay

company, and even the bright sunshine, do seem oftentimes to the mourner too painfully out of tune with his sorrow to be wilfully endured. But it still remains true that the prescribed etiquette of mourning is the overmastering power in many a shadowed home.

Naturally the child mingles merriment with sadness. His mourning is unplanned, unprescribed, unhampered by set forms. But as a result of this freedom from social prescription, his depth of soul, his heart-griefs, are unrecognized, unappreciated, and even denied. He receives but little sympathy, because his care-takers have a theory that children's troubles are not very deep, that diversion is the remedy for them, and that they are soon over and forgotten. With La Bruyère, these "care-takers" think that "children have neither

past nor future;" and so they make their present as bleak and barren as possible.

Said a brilliant woman to me, once, "Perhaps you guessed your child's feeling, but I do not believe it was as lasting as you thought; it just passed through and was gone, like things in fairy-land, leaving no scar. I think we all enjoy 'Alice in Wonderland' so much because it has that quality of a child's mind which passes on from one thing to another, and all is dim and dewy, like the dawn of day."

This is a fairly representative statement of the popular view of the sorrows, or even the sentiments generally, of childhood; and, like most popular views, it does contain some truth. It is true that children's minds "pass on from one thing to another;" in short, that a child is capricious

and spasmodic, and is, consequently, easily diverted. This quality, indeed, is all that saves his tender nature from wreck. But it is equally true that the child just as easily breaks away from wearisome diversion, and is likely to recur to his troubles as fitfully as he darts off from them.

The young mourner has, indeed, a living past. At the very period when a child is supposed to have the joyous experiences from which the sweet memories of his old age are to be drawn, he is already as one made prematurely old by living in the memories of days that are gone. Nor is it true that a child's grief passes through and is gone, "leaving no scar." Where is the adult who is unscarred by the wounds made in early life? It may be that we have grown so used to our scars that we forget whence they came and what they mean.

Loss affects different children differently, just as it does grown persons.

“Points have we all of us within our souls
Where all stand single.”

A mother who turns her children over to the care of others,—who knows not what it is to labor with them and for them in the minute details of their spiritual and bodily lives,—cannot feel the loss of them as keenly as the mother who is unhappy if they are not close by her night and day; for “love grows by serving.” The father who studies the character and tendencies of his boy by being his close companion, who plans for him and enters into his veriest play with something like a child’s enthusiasm, misses that boy, when the long absence comes, more than does the father who thinks of the boy as a man’s

pastime, or of himself as the boy's master more than as his congenial companion; the father who does not sit at his child's feet to learn of him, but puts himself only in the attitude of master,—

“Blind Authority, beating with his staff,
The child that might have led him,”—

never knows all that he loses when the child is taken from him.

So with children : they suffer losses over which their mourning is comparatively short-lived and shallow. If their affections have lain undeveloped, perhaps through parental reserve or neglect, or if their associations with the absent have not been exceedingly close, their sense of loss may be comparatively slight. In this they vary as do their elders. And it is as unfair to say that children, because they are chil-

dren, are shallow in their sorrows, as it would be untrue to say that adults, because they are adults, are deep in theirs. Just in proportion to the heart-loss is the heart-break, in child or man; and, other things being equal, the child's sorrow exceeds the adult's chiefly because of the inability of the child to describe it, and so to reach out to the world for a sympathetic sign.

Parents are helped through deep waters by letters and visits, by an understood pressure of the hand, or a silence that is known to mean more than speech. But the little people,—what human expression comes to them? What human ear is open to the unspoken language of the child's heart? Diversion is often supposed to be the extent of our new duty toward a little sister who has lost a brother, or a brother

who has lost a sister. Yet many a time the child most needs, not diversion, but the evidence of appreciation.

This is not to say that his sorrow should be continually held up before him, or that he should be encouraged to make the most of gloom by nursing trouble. On the contrary, we must be at once cheerful and sympathetic. Making common cause with the child, we are to make not light of sorrows, but view them from as high a summit and in as bright a light as possible. Death may be too intangible an intruder even to awaken him to tears. His is a kind of bereavement in which he has had no experience. He finds himself the subject of a new kind of aloneness, without knowing where to seek relief or how to fill the vacancy. All the more severe is the suffering. If he seldom rebels, his

acquiescence must not be mistaken for indifference.

Perhaps we are so accustomed to thinking of a child's giving vent to his distresses in tears that we do not look for the deeper signs of the deeper sorrows in children, as we do, in some degree, in their elders. Yet because childhood is pre-eminently the silent stage of life its profoundest griefs are profoundly still. You will find them only as you find the more shy woodland birds. You must tread softly, move cautiously, and be content with a moment's glimpse of a little breast, or with the sound of an unseen flutter. You must see how involuntary the recurrences to what has been; how pathetic the very gaiety of sport becomes because it wakens so many associations with a joyous past, so many pure desires which cannot be

gratified. You must hear the heart longings expressed in terms seemingly not selected to express longing ; you must see how present the absent playmate is to the game that moves lamely without him ; you must feel the sad undercurrents of the tide that ripples with lightsome surface ; you must hear the overtones of the gamut of child-life, and catch the melancholy harmonics of a lively strain.

There is no substitute for a child's way of being a child. No matter how closely and sympathetically we may live with our children, we can never come so close to childhood as a child can. My child deprived of her dearest and best child-companion is in a measure deprived of her

own childhood. In adapting herself so constantly to an adult environment she must in a measure do violence to her true nature. But she has no choice.

Already the solitary heart of less than five years has begun to be old by living in her memories. These are not recollections conjured up by an effort of the will as entertainment for an idle hour, but true memories that descend noiselessly upon her like a thick mist to shut her out from the things that are.

A daisy, a buttercup, a toy horse, a little brother and sister across the street, a romp in the grass, the withering leaves, the fall of snow, a Christmas tree, a birthday, a valentine, the bed-time hour,—a thousand things transport her to the days that were. She bends over the old picture-books and her long curls tumble about

the pages, but they do not touch his broad shoulder now; she glides through the chamber doors, but she is not chased and caught and kissed by her ideal of boyhood; she finds other playmates, but she cannot look up to them and confide in them as in her great good brother,—what do they know of the life that has been so sufficient to itself?

Who but her brother could interpret her pronunciations, strange to the dull ears of older folk? Who could be a papa to her dollies? Who would take her so proudly to kindergarten and to Sunday-school? Who could so appreciate her motherly attentions in sickness,—who in short, knew her, understood her, helped her, so truly as he?

Months before that fatal illness came, this little four-year-old girl unconsciously

sounded one of the keynotes of her character when she said, "I like to have sick people in this house, so that I can nurse them." The more serious side of bodily ills she had not seen. That she might close a shutter for weak eyes, or tuck a patient in, or fetch a glass of water or a little food or medicine, in short, be motherly, and that in a glad, painstaking way,—this was why she liked to have "sick people" in the house.

Is not this a miniature of the heart of womanhood? A family, to her, is not a mere aggregation of individuals under one roof—it is a living organism. When she was the mother of her quarter-hundred dolls, all the rest of us bore corresponding relations to them. But when she descended from the pedestal of motherhood to be the merry-making child;

when she showed herself half teased with a brother's sudden sallies to kiss her under her curls, seating herself to be a pupil of her three-years-senior sage, playing house or railroad or store, galloping with him through the foot-ways and out into the opens in quest of buttercups and daisies and violets, kicking up the fallen autumn leaves, or treading the soft snow, or proudly escorted by him to his school as a visitor, or making the house ring with laughter at the shadows on the wall from the street light when the two heads were close together on the pillow in the dark,—then she was not the mother, nor was he the father, but she was his sister and he her big brother—her beau-ideal.

From a velocipede romp with his boy companions in the street one May day my boy had come in to arrange with me for

a little jaunt, but feeling suddenly too tired to go, and growing feverish, he laid himself down on the lounge. The little sister, notwithstanding the attractions of outdoor life, dropped her childish play to become a nurse. She darkened the window, covered her patient, and then seated herself to soothe him by stroking his hair,—something that she knew he liked. The next morning she settled down to the business of nursing. Standing at his bedside she said artlessly: “I will not leave you all day; I will nurse you, and tuck you in, and bring you drinks of water, and stroke your head.” As she finished her sentence the doctor—a true man—arrived, and counseled their immediate separation by removing the patient to the third story. Oh, that was indeed a bitter disappointment!

For three lonesome days she went out and picked daisies and buttercups, and sent them up to her exiled lover, calling cheerily to him from the foot of the stairs.

Then a great-hearted family, almost strangers to her, though not to us, opened their doors, and took her into their home as a retreat of safety.

Often from the gardens of her new residence, a mile away, she sent roses and pansies to her sick brother, until finally, one day, just a week from the afternoon when first she set herself to darken the windows, the windows of her little soul were darkened too. She sent a bouquet of pansies—his favorite flower—to lay on the stilled bosom of her best, her nearest, her dearest friend. But



yet she was at a distance, diverted by her novel surroundings, generously entertained. Moreover,

"A simple child
That lightly draws its breath
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?"

It was not until the latter part of June that we were living together again. Not in our stricken, desolated home, however, but being the summer season we gathered under the roof of grandparents, who sadly welcomed one lonely little grandchild instead of two—ay, instead of four.

Under the spell of old associations again she began to draw her breath less lightly, to feel less life in every limb, and to know something of death.

Down the borough street this deserted, unforgetting sister skipped with the light

foot that had so often followed her brother with a more than true-love's pride and devotion. She knew him every inch from hat to shoe, and none knew better than she how well his clothes became him, and he adorned them.

Suddenly she stopped at a tailor's shop, where little boys' suits were standing on forms at the door. There was one of dark blue flannel, blouse-waist and trousers, just such as her brother wore to school and at play. She stepped up to it, stroked it lovingly, and said to her mother, "This is a nice suit." Later, when she was out strolling with her aunt, she walked up to the suit, and said, touchingly, "It is like N—— used to wear." Some days after that she passed another tailor's, and, discovering a boy's suit, she surveyed it, patted it affectionately, and said mourn-

fully, "Those would be nice stockings for N——; wouldn't they, mama?"

One July morning, after she had been standing very quietly by her mother, she climbed into her lap, and requested that another who was present should leave the room. On being left to themselves, she whispered appealingly to mama, "I want something that N—— played with." What was it? "I don't know," she answered; "just something he played with."

So it was not that she wanted to play, but that she wanted him personally; and the nearest she could get to that was something that he had handled, and with which he was associated. Has a child no real deep poetic sentiment? Another time she sought her mother in her room, threw her arms around her neck, and said, "O mama, I know what would be the nicest

surprise!—for N—— to get alive again, and you to go down home and get him, and bring him here to me.”

Although the same gay-spirited child-life was visible in her, yet through the warp and woof of it ran a thread of somberness. Touches of unconscious pathos were ever visible to the spectator of that life-picture. Was it time to cut the grass? Oh, what fun to toss it in the sunshine and under the walnut-tree! She would get her rake; there stood two little rakes. She would get her wagon; there waited two wagons. One rake, one wagon; one to load and draw and unload, none to laugh with, none to talk to, none to listen and none to laugh again! So all her plays soon wear out. There is no companionship; no one, not even another child, can take the place of just that

one brother, with whom the horses and wagons, the grass and the trees and the flowers, the books and the pencils, the rainy-day amusements indoors, and bright-day plays outdoors, were sacredly and often exclusively associated.

The summer dragged wearily. September came, but it brought not the missing one, for whom there had been no visible tears, no loud lament. But the little woman had kept her sorrow too long pent up. It was more than three months now.

Standing by mama, she looked up, and with quivering lip, said, "O mama! I *do* want N——."

Her mother told her, as cheerily as possible, yet with the right earnestness and true accord, that we all wanted to see him.

"Don't people ever get alive again when they die?"

"Yes, but not here."

"Well, they ought to; they ought to get alive, when they die, when people want to see them as much as I do N——."

She was about to give way in tears, and mama took her on her lap.

"N—— must come back! He *must* come!"

All that day she seemed overpowered with her bereavement. She walked aimlessly about,—touching her eyes with her finger now and then. Would she go to the post-office with mama? She would. They went, and are now coming back again. In the middle of the street she stops short, throws her arms around mama, and, looking up, says:

"I'm thinking about N—— all the time, mama; I'm thinking of him all the time."

Evening comes. She will draw pictures in the library before bed-time, as she and brother used to do. Now she is employed, now she seems "diverted,"—forgetting grief and melancholy. She is the eager child, acting as a child.

She has drawn a boat. Is she satisfied? She shows no sense of achievement, no smiles. The eagerness and elasticity of childhood seem like a spent bow. Sliding down from the chair, she brings her drawing to her father, with searching comment :
"N—— could draw a nice boat."

Bedtime comes. She lies in the darkened room, repeating little hymns to her mama; then, in a low tone, she repeats to herself his name four times over—nothing else—as though his name at least were left to hold to, and it seemed something like having him here. It was a defiance

of the material absence and recognition of the spiritual presence of her lost love.

Night after night, all summer long, she put her brother's picture under her pillow, kissing it the last thing before retiring and the first thing in the morning. One night she added to her prayer, "God bless God, who took N——." Once, on waking, she brought his picture out from under her pillow, and, kissing it again and again, said that she liked him in his dark green dress (this he wore when she was only two years old). "I liked him in his trousers and in his dresses too."

One day in September she held that same picture up before dolly Alice, and said, with charmingly serious naïvete, "Alice, that was your papa. N—— was papa to all my dollies."

Time dragged on, and more and more

she longed to go home. She would be nearer to her lost lover by being nearer to the places and things that he loved. She had not seen them since that day in May when she was hurried away without so much as bidding him a long good-by.

The day arrived at last. How strange home seemed! It was near the middle of October—almost half a year since she left it. She came to the room where they had slept together—the room with its new bay-window, where the electric street-light poured in at night, and made the funny shadow that had come to be a personal companion to them. She spied a sack that her brother sometimes used to wear when he was in dresses. The house was chilly, and she forthwith took off her own, put his on, and wore it for days, because it was his.

One Sunday she told her maid that she had two brothers in heaven.

"And you know you have a little sister there," added the maid.

She never saw the sister, nor her other brother. All at once this half-mythical part of the family became real to her, as she exclaimed heartily, "Then N—— will have a little sister to take care of him!"

What thoughts may have been all these five months troubling her breast, because she feared that he was somewhere uncared for and alone—had not a little mother-sister's attention, to close a shutter, to smooth a blanket, to bring him his medicine, or to stroke his head! For why should she not think of her dear patient with the strong impressions of her last hour with him? But now he had a little sister, like herself, to take care of him.

It was his comfort that she had been thinking of; it was his loneliness and desolateness, away from his home, that gave her many a secret heartache.

I remember an evening, in that October, when I lay on the bed beside the lonely sister. I was a poor substitute, for the most child-like adult is a miserable apology for a child. Suddenly she leaped up to the head-post at her side of the bed.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Turning off the steam to stop the engine."

Then I remembered how the two used to play that the bed was a boat, and both would spring to their posts to manipulate the imaginary steam-valves. Yet, doing my best to help work out the illusion, the post at my side had a poor engineer. All the rising to the child's level that I might

essay, what a farce it would be! How flat and dead the play! Like a one-armed person she seemed, lopsided, out of balance, unperpendicular; life looked paralyzed on one side, and that her strongest and best side.

And yet I loved to see her wake the old times again. She asked for the shadow on the wall, so much a human face once, but now a mere shadow, with nothing in it. Were there tears in it for me? Her thoughts lay too deep for tears.

Here lies one of the peculiarities of a child's sorrow. Each thrust at the soul comes suddenly, and is borne without preparation. The old play is anticipated with the old enthusiasm, with recollections of the fun there was in it, quite innocently of the fact that the changed circumstances must change the result.

Each fruitless endeavor is a fresh revelation that the good times were as much a matter of the playmate as of the play.

No sooner were we done with that suggestive shadow than we settled closely side by side on the pillow, and she began to ask whether the flowers that she sent to her brother died when he died. "Did you put them in water?" "Did N—— look at them all the time?" "What did you do with the flowers we bought at a store?" (This last referred to the pansies.)

She wanted to know where his grave was. I answered, telling her that there were now three little graves in a row, and that N——'s was next to his other little sister.

"Why didn't you put the two brothers together?" she asked, her conception of the family as a whole fast growing stronger

and clearer. More and more she speaks of them by name in a familiar way, as though she fully realized that they were all brothers and sisters. Before her loss she had little realization of this. But sorrow educates the child as well as the adult, and heaven becomes the real home, and this life only a waiting for reunion there.

Yet one is pre-eminently *her* brother. She will stand and look with

“The insuperable look
That drinks as if it never could be full”

at the sight of any little girl in company with her brother. “There goes a little girl with her brother,” she will say with pathetic force on the last two words. So, too, “I saw E—— playing with her brother on the porch.” Once again, “I don’t like little girls without brothers,”—

it was an incomplete and unnatural state, like her own. However simple such words may read to the eye, the ear that hears them hears yet more the unspoken plaint, "I am left brotherless and alone."

One afternoon, when her mama was dressing, she noticed that there was no sound from the library where the little mother had been left to herself and her dollies. So, stealing over, she found the little sister kneeling on the floor with her cheek resting on the sofa. Without response to an inquiry as to what she was doing, the deep-souled child lifted her head. Tenderly pressed between the sofa and her cheek, so long unvisited by her brother, was his photograph. They were close and alone again just where they had so often had uproarious fun. Was mama's question too intrusive? She rose, lov-

ingly took the picture up, and walked silently out of the room with it.

The sacredness of association shows itself in what outwardly appear as mere trifles. On my birthday she gave me a leather pocket-case containing her picture and her brother's. A little slip of tissue paper was between the two photographs. The next day was Sunday. As we were walking to church, I observed that she had been carefully carrying in her hand a piece of white tissue paper. "What are you carrying that piece of paper for?" I asked. She answered that she thought it was the piece of paper that came off of her brother's picture.

Two weeks later, she held up her Sunday doll, and said tenderly,—just as though she knew what it meant by experience,—“Papa, this dolly's brother died.” At

another time in the day she said, "Mama, this dolly's brother died."

It was in November that she held her favorite doll before her brother's picture which stood on her bureau, and said: "Wilton, that is a picture of N——, and the reason you don't see him running about here is that he died."



A few days before Christmas two pretty advertising cards came to the house. She was glad to get them, but there was the sorrowful undercurrent to her gladness when she said, musingly, "If N—— was here, one of these would be mine and one his; and I would give him the prettiest one."

She never knew how we suffered in the

anticipation of Christmas. Child-like, she looked innocently, eagerly forward as in past years, without realizing what a bitter failure the attempt at festivity must be. When the day came, all the would-be diversions of tree and gifts, and the best effort that we could make to be gay for her, seemed little better than inane show or mockery. There was no jollity in her, no hilarity. "It don't seem like Christmas to me," she said, as she turned from the tree to look at her presents. When she went to breakfast she hung her head, and refused to eat; she would not talk; she was dull and dispirited. As she left the table, she walked lifelessly through the hall, repeating disconsolately, "It don't seem like Christmas to me." We supposed that she failed to find the real Christmas spirit without knowing exactly why.

But later in the week she showed that she knew more than she had expressed on Christmas Day, when she said that it did not seem like Christmas without her brother. "It will never be Christmas to me when N—— is not here." But how reserved she was about the real reason, until silent childhood could restrain itself no longer !

Brother had bought a toy Easter chicken for her. He emptied his purse on the counter of every cent, and when the shopman agreed to sell it below price, because the little fellow was out of money, he ran home and presented it before Easter day, because he could not wait longer to please her. That chicken she has brought to me, with loving care, to put safely away, "because N—— gave it to me." So too she sorted out her own toys to give to

the inmates of the Home for Crippled Children; but her brother's toys she wanted carefully kept, because they were his.

Toward the end of January she said, one day, she wished her brother had scarletina, and was lying over in bed, for then he would be playing with blocks. "I think it is nice to have scarletina, because then you can play with blocks." She walked about awhile, and then added: "Mama, I often dream about N——. Once I dreamed that N—— came to me, and he never went away again." When her maid entered, she broke out,—“O Belo! wouldn't it be fun if the bell would ring, and N—— would come upstairs, and never leave the house again?”

Often she tells her dollies of her brother's sickness, and speaks of him to them as “your papa.” And indeed he enters

largely into other plays. She imagines him present; she apportions her things as though he were here; she puts mint-drops in his box when she puts them in her own. But this palls, and the terrible reality flies back upon her like a spring-trap, and holds her in its cold grip.

Do I exaggerate the power of association in a child of five years? It manifests itself in inconceivable ways. For instance, she is fond of going back to visit the friends who opened their doors to her. Yet she declines to go there by the same course over which she went so innocently that May day. At one point on the route two streets cross diagonally; and more than once she has said, with emphasis, "I never shall forget that place. I never shall forget the day you took me over to W——'s."

Spring was approaching. New diversions must be contrived. She should have a tea-party. The little girls came. They had a good time supping around their own private table all by themselves. After she was tucked in bed that night, calling her mama to her side, she asked whether it would not have been better if her brother had been here. Why? "Because then I would not have had to play with the little girls, but just with N——. Wouldn't it have been better?"

All the little girls together could not fill the one vacancy. She missed not only his companionship, but his leadership.

Once in a long while the tribute of devotion hovers between the silent and the vocal, between the conscious and the unconscious expression of the burdened soul.

The child can hardly reveal herself to grown folks. What do they know of a child's longing? But silence will burst its bonds anon. Love must speak at last.

She has a white rabbit—not a real one, but maybe those long flannel ears can hear her plaint, those glass eyes can read her look. It is in the gray light of the morning. She has wakened too early; but mama hears her stirring, and goes in to fill the empty half of her bed for an hour. The rabbit is there for his morning sport.

"Bun," said the child playfully,—“Bun, do you see the pictures on my bureau?”

“Yes,” answered mama for the rabbit.

“Well, Bun, the nicest one is the little boy in the blue frame; he died, Bun.” The smile faded from her face, and she spoke less lightly. “He was my brother,

Bun; he was a good brother to me." She drew her white sleeve across her eyes, and her voice grew low. "He will never come back, Bun; he will never come back. If he had been with me when I bought you out of the store-window, he would not have let me carry you home; *he* would have carried you. He loved me, Bun." She hid her eyes behind her white-sleeved arm again for a moment, and continued: "He had a dark-blue suit and striped blue-and-white suits for summer time. He was a good brother to me, Bun,"—and the tender, brave little soul gave way at last in tears that could no longer be restrained, in grief that could no longer hide itself in the guise of childishness.

May days came again—the anniversary of unforgotten days, when Gladness first joined hands with Sorrow. "I wish N——

was here to help me pick daisies," she said plaintively, after making several excursions to the whited fields. Blue skies and green grass and nodding wild-flowers looked soberer now. But she loved nature still. She brought in a little basket full of the long blossoms of the horse-chestnut, and we found her seated before her little table, sorting them into two carefully selected piles.

"What are you doing with those pretty blossoms?" we asked. She half turned her head away, looked somewhat confused, and made no reply. Repeating the question interestedly to draw out the answer that we had reason to suspect, she pointing first to one pile, and then to the other, in a low voice answered:

"These are for N——, and these are for me."

Thus a year's absence had not made his imaginary presence less real. He was still an essential part of her life. But the unsophisticated child showed none the less the mother heart when one day she put her arms around mama's neck, and, unprompted, said sympathizingly, "Mama, you have only me to love; you haven't any little boy to love now,—have you, mama?"

Yes, guileless childhood, true-hearted and deep-souled, misunderstood and long-suffering, has its heart-losses, its loneliness of sorrow. Can the moralist still tell us that "children have neither past nor future"? Will the short-sighted on-looker still insist that children's sorrows are neither deep nor lasting, that diversion is their unfailing remedy, and that they but "pass through and are gone, leaving no scar"? Out of these few uncolored incidents, culled

from the many in the record of over a year,
is sketched this picture of a child

“ Haunted—by what ghost? A gentle spirit
Of memory faithful to the call of love.”

Now come with us just as May is verging upon June. We are miles away from the city. The little girl is romping in the hospitable precincts of rural life—now in the strawberry patch, now on the lawn; now making herself sociable with ducks and chickens; now at the milking; now watching the white-headed daisies dancing in the green meadows, now the white-winged windmill whirling against the deep blue sky. This is a place for a city child to be gay in!

But earth has no place attractive enough, no heart close enough, to shut out from a child either memories or anticipations.

Night comes. The room is dark, and there is a voice from the pillow on the cot by the wall.

"Now, mama, sing me to sleep. Sing about Jesus and the angels; don't sing anything else."

"What shall I sing about them?"

"I will tell you. Jesus sends the angels down to bring the little children up to Heaven when they are not looking. First they take the brother up, and then the little sister, and he sends an angel for the playthings too. Then he sends an angel to tell the mama and the papa where the little children are, and that he has them up in Heaven. Then he sends an angel for the mama to take her to them, and then an angel for the papa."

With this picture shining through her closed eyelids, this bright vision of a fam-

ily reunited, her own simple words sang her away into dreamland.

Merry and sad, tender-hearted and brave, the every-day life of the child is an unaffected, unconscious tribute to the loved and lost. If we recognize it, we pay a just tribute to the depth and constancy of childhood. If not, an angel's hand might beckon us in vain.



ONE GIFT MORE.

Last night I saw my darling boy ; last night
I talked with him.

I saw him not as spirit, robed in light,
Not vague and dim,
But just as I have seen him day by day,—
The boy he really was, absorbed in play.

And that is what I have, through months of tears,
Most longed to see,
And what, through all the coming, yearning years,
Can never be :
What death has done,—oh, would it were not true !—
Eternity itself cannot undo.

I know that he is safe ; and I for joy
Sometimes can smile.
But oh that this could give me back my boy
A little while,
To make this sore grief-weariness depart,
And break the awful silence in my heart.

But now, last night my angel stole away
From realms above ;
Once more we were together at our play,
Once more in love.
God giveth his beloved sleep ; it seems
He gives me more,—he gives me precious dreams.

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